

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A system for displaying item collection previews, comprising:
at least one display object having metadata tags that describe two or more data items in a collection of data items; and
a control component that selectively animates a presentation of the items based in part on the metadata tags and detected user activities.
2. The system of claim 1, further comprising one or more controller inputs to control the presentation of the items.
3. The system of claim 2, the controller inputs include at least one of a mouse cursor control, a mouse wheel control, a voice command, an eye-gaze control, and a mechanical control to control the presentation of items.
4. The system of claim 1, the collection of data items further comprising a top item displayed as a thumbnail preview or an expanded size preview.
5. The system of claim 1, further comprising a control to provide a transitional animation that is employed to visually link movement of an axial controller with a change in a displayed icon.
6. The system of claim 1, further comprising a currently selected preview image that is integrated with a collection icon as a reminder of collection contents.
7. The system of claim 1, the control component further comprises at least one of an object locator, a command detector, a content analyzer, and a formatter to selectively animate the presentation of the items.

8. The system of claim 1, further comprising a graphical user interface to selectively animate the presentation of items.
9. The system of claim 8, the graphical user interface further comprising a set of preference controls that can change, by type of item, preview visualizations and access behaviors associated therewith.
10. The system of claim 1, the items include one or more subcomponents that can be previewed, selected, or displayed.
11. The system of claim 1, the items can be previewed in two dimensional or three dimensional form.
12. The system of claim 1, for comprising global controls for collecting unrelated items in a set of items to subsequently preview the items.
13. The system of claim 1, further comprising controls to scale the items to be previewed.
14. The system of claim 1, further comprising a control to determine a rough position in a collection of items.
15. A computer readable medium having computer readable instructions stored thereon for implementing at least one of the display object and the control component of claim 1.

16. A system that facilitates information preview from a collection, comprising:
 - means for displaying a set of information items;
 - means for selecting the set of information items;
 - means for detecting a value with respect to the set of information items; and
 - means for previewing the information items based upon incrementing or decrementing the value.
17. A method to facilitate information previews form a set of items, comprising:
 - selecting a stack of display items with a first control; and
 - cycling the stack of display items with a second control in order to provide an information preview with respect to at least one of the items.
18. The method of claim 17, further comprising providing a transitional display for at least two display items in accordance with the second control.
19. The method of claim 17, further comprising employing the first control to find an approximate position in the stack of display items.
20. The method of claim 17, the information preview is associated with at least one of a display that is about the same size as the stack, smaller than the stack, and larger than the stack.
21. The method of claim 17, the first control is associated with a curser which is controlled by a mouse and the second control is associated with a wheel of the mouse.

22. A graphical user interface, comprising:
 - a display object for displaying a group of pages;
 - a tag associated with each member page from the group of pages;
 - a curser to select the group of pages; and
 - an axial controller to cycle the group of pages.
23. The graphical user interface of claim 22, the axial controller causes a transition animation between pages when cycling the group of pages.